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population of nearly 6000 souls, eleven places of public worship, profusely supplied with clergy (including two bishops), a citadel of formidable strength and large size, several large two-story stone houses, with "modern conveniences," a dozen mills, ever so many model farms, stocked with fine cattle, and provided with all the modern implements of agriculture, one or two manufacturing establishments, a court house with a recorder at \$4000 a year, a governor, staff, and imposing body of mounted police. There is more than one good library there, and several good cellars; a man may dine there according to Soyer, drive a two-forty nag in a dashing cariole over the crisp snow, dance the last Cellarius polka redowa with ladies of any shade of color from the pure bronze to the mere white, discuss the principles of human society and the theory of popular governments as learnedly as the thing could be done at Washington or Cincinnati. Assuredly such an oasis in the great North American zahara ought not to share the fate of the braves who lived before Agamemnon.

It was in the month of June that I started, in company with a gentleman whose duties obliged him to undertake the journey for the settlement on Red River. We left Sault St. Marie in a "North canoe," pulled by ten stout half-breeds. I can recommend this mode of traveling to lazy men. One lies down on blankets or skins, or whatever couch has been prepared; the motion of the canoe after the first day is positively delightful, and the judicious traveler takes care to lay in a stock of books and cigars to occupy the day. Nothing to be done there but read and smoke; for one soon tires of the stories which the half-breeds tell, and of the plaintive old French songs (among which I recognized some that I had heard before in Normandy and Lower Brittany) which they chant in time to the paddles. At night we ran ashore and camped out; this, to be honest, was the least pleasant part of the journey, for besides the insects—themselves enough to disgust a traveler—the night dews, and the morning mist were formidable enemies to one who had been visited by our periodic "chills." However, none of us suffered, and after nine days' travel, during which we were occasionally enlivened by the danger of a traverse, when a sudden flaw might have sent us all to the bottom in ten minutes beyond hope of salvation, we arrived at Fort William, the great western settlement of the Hudson Bay Company on Lake Superior. A couple of days were passed there, rambling through the country and on the lake shore in search of game and geological specimens; on the third we took to our canoe again, and began to ascend the river toward Rainy Lake. The first day or two were very pleasant. The scenery was fine, and my companion, who was a tolerable sportsman, made some clever shots at the wild fowl, whose homes we were disturbing. But our pleasure was soon to end. Rain began to fall, probably in order to

A VISIT TO RED RIVER.

THERE is a spot on this continent which travelers do not visit, and from which civilization seems in a measure shut out. Deserts, almost trackless, divide it on all sides from the habitations of cultivated man; no railroads, or steamers, or telegraph wires, or lines of stages make their way thither: to reach it, or, once there, to escape from it, is an exploit of which one may almost boast. Receiving no impressions from without, it reflects none. It sends forth neither newspapers, nor books, nor correspondents' letters; no paragraph in any newspaper records its weal or woe; it is not even marked on the maps or mentioned in the gazetteers. Yet RED RIVER SETTLEMENT, for that is the name of the unknown spot, contains a

justify the name of the lake to our ears; and on warm evenings the mosquitoes were very troublesome. We bore up against all; when the rain was heavy we ran the canoe upon the beach, encamped, and made ourselves as comfortable as we could; as for the mosquitoes, we avenged the sins of the few on the many, without, however, materially alleviating the torment.

After several days' travel, interspersed with these wet days, we came to the great portage, where a walk of a good many miles awaited us. I was glad of it for my part, by way of a change; but the *voyageurs*, to whose lot it fell to carry the canoe over the uneven ground, up hill and through swamp, had a hard time, I fear. They enjoyed their pipe and sleep the evening we reached the stream flowing into Lake Winnipeg. A week more paddling, and we came in sight of the broad waters of Lake Winnipeg, and the pretty French-like houses of the half-breeds on Red River. Before our journey was fairly ended, I saw in that almost inaccessible wild several farms and farm-houses which would have done credit to the best portions of the valley of the Central or Erie railroads.

Before I allude to them, I must say a word of the history of Red River Settlement, which is stirring for so out-of-the-way a place. In doing so, I shall make free use of Mr. Ross's History of the Settlement, which has just been published.

Forty-five years ago the most powerful potentate on this continent was one Thomas Douglas, Earl of Selkirk. Mr. Madison had power enough to contend with all the might of Great Britain; but Thomas Douglas ruled a far wider realm than he. He was the chief of the Hudson Bay Company. No carpet knight he; in the depth of the pathless woods, on the virgin streams, in the bosom of the arctic snows, his spurs were won. A man of private means, which he sacrificed to this Company, he was also brave and enterprising. Neither expense, nor danger, nor obstacles, could deter him from his resolves. To the perseverance of the Scot he united the fire of the Celt; with the proud self-reliance of the peer, he combined the shrewd tact of the merchant.

At that time the great fur country was disputed by two rival companies, the Hudson Bay Company and the Northwest Company. Their charters were distinct, and so were their territories. But there was not room for both. Every man in the Northwest knew that one of the two must perish, and those who measured the respective strength of the rivals, said confidently that the Hudson Bay Company was doomed. Thomas, Earl of Selkirk, made up his mind that it must conquer, and that the Northwesters must go to the wall.

Examining with the eye of a soldier the country where the war was to be carried on, he saw that two grand essentials were wanting to his side—physical strength, and a basis of operations. To supply both, he obtained from the

Company, and from various Indian tribes claiming to hold dominion over the territory, a grant of land in the neighborhood of Red River, a tributary of Lake Winnipeg, which joins the lake about 100 miles northwest of Fort William, and made arrangements to transport thither colonists from the Scotch Highlands. A stout colony firmly established there would not only equalize the strength of the combatants, but would afford the Hudson Bay Company an unrivaled basis of operations, as well as a convenient stepping-stone to the trade of the West. Accordingly, in the summer of 1812, the Earl of Selkirk transplanted the "first brigade" of colonists to Red River. The settlers were to have a hundred acres of land each, to be paid for in produce (the payment was afterward remitted); they were to have a minister of their own persuasion; they were to enjoy the rights of British subjects; and they were guaranteed a market at their own doors for all their produce. On these terms hardy Highlanders were not wanting to risk the adventure.

But neither were the Northwesters blind. Their preparations were made silently, effectively. No sooner had the "first brigade" arrived, than a band of men, begrimed with war-paint, dressed in Indian dress, and armed to the teeth, rode down upon them and bade them depart. Strange to say, there was not an intelligible word spoken on either side. The colonists spoke nothing but Gaelic; their assailants Indian-French. But the gestures of the latter were too plain to be mistaken. Out of charity they agreed to carry the women and children on the cruppers of their horses; the men were to walk. For the "services" of their guides they paid as they could. A woman gave her wedding-ring; a Gael the cherished musket his father had borne at Culloden. So they traveled, sore of heart and foot, by the side of their conquerors, to Pembina.

After living there on charity during the winter, they returned to Red River in the spring. A year's peace enabled them to break ground and rear shelter. In 1815 the Northwesters were upon them again. This time there was resistance. Accordingly the Northwesters burned down the Colonial House, took the Governor prisoner, killed his aid. Then more fighting; and finally, the brief mandate from the Northwest headquarters: "All settlers to retire immediately from the Red River, and no appearance of a colony to remain." A command executed to the letter. Three hundred miles over the wilderness the Highlanders were sent in exile, and their houses burned down.

Nothing discouraged, the Hudson Bay Company sent a strong force to escort the exiles back to the settlement. A new brigade arrived just in time to help them rebuild their houses. The Northwesters changed their tactics. They too hired Gaels, and sent them to Red River, with instructions to seduce the colonists to leave the place. The Highlanders, proof against corruption, could not resist the old familiar sounds

of the Gaelic. They deserted in droves. Depopulation menaced the settlement. The Earl of Selkirk calmly prepared to import more brigades.

At last, in June, 1816, matters came to a crisis. News reached Governor Semple at Red River that a body of 300 horsemen, war-painted and heavily armed, was approaching the settlement. In a rash moment he armed himself and twenty-seven others, and marched out to parley. At a short distance from the enemy he halted, and consulted his aids. At that moment a ball from the enemy struck a man at his side. A volley followed, and twenty-one of the twenty-eight, including the Governor, were shot dead; the other seven escaped, wounded. The victors marched into the settlement, sacked and burned the houses, carried off all that was worth stealing, and drove out the colonists, warning them that they would be hunted down and shot like wild beasts if they appeared there again. It was some consolation afterward to the survivors of the ruthless attack to discover that twenty-six out of the sixty-five Northwesters who fired on Governor Semple perished violently within a short period.

Then the Earl of Selkirk acted. He was in the country. He had brought with him from Europe a battalion of Swiss mercenaries of the Dalgetty stamp—men who were called *De Meurons*, from an old colonel of theirs, and who "feared neither God, man, nor beast." With these he marched directly on Fort William, the head-quarters of the Northwest Company, and took it. This was a fine piece of strategy, as it threw the Northwesters on the defensive, and made the Hudson Bay party the assailants. Under cover of the capture of Fort William, the Earl led back the exiles, for the third time, to Red River, remitted the price of their lands, and re-established the colony on a new and solid basis. He chose mill-sites, set apart lands for religious and educational establishments, surveyed the colony, advanced the settlers tools and stock. Under his directions agricultural operations were commenced on a sound principle, and in some spots a yield of forty-fold rewarded the Highlanders' industry.

Still, as farming had been begun too late, the harvest was scanty, and at the approach of winter the whole colony abandoned the place. They fled to Pembina, there hoping to subsist on the product of the chase. When they arrived there, they found they must join a party of Indians and half-breeds which had set out some days previously. Off they started, through the snow. They were ill clad, and ill supplied with food. The thermometer ranged from 35° to 40° below zero. "Our sufferings," said one of the wretched Highlanders, "were almost beyond human endurance, and even at this distant day we shudder at the painful recollection; for many a time, when the last mouthful was consumed, and our children crying for more, we knew not how or where the next morsel was to come from. A rabbit, a crow, a snow-bird, or even a piece of parchment, would be found, perhaps; and thus

from time to time we kept body and soul together. . . . We reached the camp when the last morsel of food was gone, and we were at the last gasp on the eve of Christmas-day."

Starvation avoided by entering the service of the Indian hunters as camp drudges, the Highlanders returned to Red River in the spring. This fourth beginning was the most promising of all. The Northwesters only carried off a man from time to time. The weather was fine; the crops promised well. Hope began to cheer the settlers; when, alas! "just as the corn was in ear and the barley almost ripe, a cloud of grasshoppers from the west darkened the air, and fell like a heavy shower of snow on the colony." In one night crops, gardens, and every green herb in the settlement perished. The Highlanders wept.

To Pembina again that fall, and more sickening misery there. In the spring a fifth attempt to settle Red River. But the June heats quickened the larvæ the grasshoppers had left in the ground. They arose from the earth in masses. They lay four solid inches deep on some spots. They poisoned the water. Men shoveled them aside with spades to make a way into their hovels. No green thing—neither the herbs, nor the leaves of the bushes, nor the bark of the trees, nor the grass of the plain—saw the September of that year. Even out-door fires were extinguished by the shower of insects, and the air was infected by the effluvia from their putrefying corpses. To return to Pembina was a necessity.

But the perseverance of the Highlanders grew nobler with obstacles. For the sixth time, in the spring of 1820, they returned to Red River. Lord Selkirk's iron will knew no such thing as failure. The men had not even saved seed out of the general ruin. At a cost of \$5000 he procured 250 bushels of seed wheat from Missouri. Again the land was sowed; and again the bright days of June were darkened by the grasshoppers. But man can always live down obstacles. The plague abated. Early in the season the grasshoppers disappeared, never to return; and for the first time in their eight years' experience, the Red River colonists gathered in their harvest safely. More colonists arrived—Swiss, Germans, and Scotch. Men still starved at seed time. The poor Swiss suffered horribly; bartered their all for the meaneast pittance. Men gave their guns, women their rings, or what was dearer still, for a cat-fish. But the colonial roots had struck, and, in comparison with the past, these seemed very bright times.

But the end was not yet. Lord Selkirk died an exile in France, having escaped from the sheriff sent to arrest him for the affair of June, and his death was the signal for a new plague. His deputy, the Governor of the settlement, a fellow named McDowell, was as great a pest as the grasshoppers. In the wild of Red River he kept baronial house, with "secretaries, assistant secretaries, accountants, orderlies, grooms, cooks, and butlers." From the time the stores

of rum arrived till the puncheons were empty, the Governor was never wholly sober. When his guests were assembled to make a night of it, the heel of a broken bottle, filled with wheat, would be set on a cask, and a man stationed beside it with orders to take out a grain for every bottle filled. As the carouse went on, his Excellency would call, "Bob, how stands the hour-glass?" To which the sentinel would reply, "High, your honor, high!" And the guests would set to work to lower the pile of grains with renewed energy. This fellow plundered the colonists shamefully. Lord Selkirk's orders were that they should be supplied with all necessary tools, seed, etc., on credit. The Governor received their orders, charged the goods against them, but often forgot to furnish the articles required. He forgot, in the same way, to credit them with the work they performed; and had no doubt realized a handsome fortune at the time he was relieved of his duties.

Having got rid of him, the colony was afterward blessed with a new ruler who had the advantage of being a cousin of the Governor of the Company. His name was Pelly. His plan was to take every thing easily, and lay trust in Providence. On one occasion, an Indian was brought before him to be tried on a charge of murder. It was proved that he had sallied forth with a party of warriors of his own tribe to make war on some enemies of theirs. Being unsuccessful in his search for the tribe in question, and at the same time unwilling to return home without a trophy, he met an old woman of his own tribe, killed her, and took her scalp. When the evidence was complete, the Governor turned to the culprit, and sternly remarked to the interpreter: "Tell him that he has manifested a disposition subversive of all order, and that if he should not be punished in this world, he is sure to be punished in the next. Let him be discharged!"

Struggling on as best they could under such rulers as these, the Red River colonists reached the year 1826. A fearful storm in the December of 1825 commenced a new catalogue of mis-haps. The buffalo were driven from their haunts by the storm; the cold was intense: what from the frost, and what from famine, thirty-three persons perished, and many others were severely tried. That winter the thermometer often marked 45° below zero, and the snow lay three feet thick in the level plains. On the 2d May the thaw began, and the river rose nine feet perpendicular in twenty-four hours. The Indians stood aghast. On the 4th the water reached the cellars; on the 5th every house in the village was abandoned. The settlers flocked to the high grounds, some losing all their property. A current set in toward Lake Winnipeg, and on the surface the survivors of the deluge watched their houses, barns, carriages, furniture, fencing, and every thing else that would float, drift steadily toward the great lake. For nineteen consecutive days the waters rose, and every trace of the colony was washed away. On the twentieth day the people held a council on

their hill-top, in order to decide whether they should sail in search of a new home. While they were debating, with weary hearts, not a few among them yet clinging to the scene of their miseries, news came that the waters had not risen an inch for many hours. The council broke up. So intense was the anxiety that no man spoke. Some seized rods and planted them in the water to serve as tide-gauges. Others, less hopeful, sat sternly down by the side of the deluge, gazing at it with stony faces. Before long, men came running up to say that the news was correct. The water certainly did not rise; nay, more, it was falling. There could be no doubt of the fact, and the colonists unanimously resolved to stay where they were. They waited patiently, and on the 15th June stood once more on the site of their lost village. A new beginning was made, and seed sowed on the 22d June, in time for the fall harvest.

This was the last of the beginnings of Red River settlement. From 1826 to the present time it has been continuously occupied. But its fortunes—after it became a fixed fact—still fluctuated widely and erratically. Who would expect to find a Rue Quincampoix or a fancy stock fever at Red River? Wall Street must look to its laurels.

The first bubble was the Buffalo Wool Company. This was so wonderful a concern, and so certain to make the fortunes of every stockholder, that it was incomprehensible how sane men had lived a week at Red River without lighting upon it. Nothing to be done but to walk out into the plains, kill buffalo, take their wool, dress and weave it; cure their hides and tan them. Here were woolen goods and leather not only for the whole of Rupert's Land, but for export. A company formed, a palatial factory erected, and orders sent to England for machinery, implements, dyes, and skilled workmen, the work began. Every soul was enlisted. Women left their babies, men their fields. Who would till the fields for a beggarly subsistence, when the Buffalo Wool Company offered wealth in exchange for a few months' exertion? Every body was either a skinner, sorter, wool-dresser, teaser, or bark manufacturer: wages were no object; so little girls got \$3 a-day. Net results: every body at the factory got drunk day after day; the little wool collected was spoiled; the hides rotted; cloth which cost \$12 a yard to make, sold for \$1 in England; the Company failed, and the colonists lived on short commons that winter.

But failures seem to have been regarded as encouraging on Red River. The Earl of Selkirk sunk no less a sum than \$425,000 in planting the colony; his successors and their assignees, the Hudson Bay Company, continued to extend liberality to the settlement on an undiminished scale. All at once the Governor discovered that immense fortunes were to be made by growing flax. Premiums were offered for the best specimens. Choice seed was imported.

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Every thing was abandoned for flax. Flax was to be the great staple of Red River. But when the seed came, and was distributed, matters were so arranged that the Governor's friends got all the best qualities, and consequently the premiums. Against this the democracy of Red River not unnaturally rebelled, and the flax scheme fell through.

It was followed by another Wool Company, sheep and not buffalo being, however, the wool-bearers this time. A sum of money was subscribed in the colony for the purchase of sheep in the United States, and a party sent to Missouri to buy. The commissioners arrived at Saint Louis, visited the farms, found sheep, and offered \$1 50 a head. The Missourians—who were probably Yankees—thinking the Red River men wanted them badly, asked \$2. On this, Rae, the head commissioner, took offense, and swore he would have nothing to do with such extortionists. The Missourians repented, and offered to take the \$1 50; but Ray was inexorable, and shaking the dust from his feet, journeyed to Kentucky, 450 miles further. There he bought the sheep at his own price, and had the satisfaction of paying for their pasture and keep every night on the way home. On the journey through Missouri he halted to shear the sheep, and contracted to deliver the wool, at a high price, to a speculator. When the wool was ready for delivery, the purchaser proved unable to raise the whole amount fixed; other bidders, at lower rates, offered to take it; but Rae, furiously indignant, refused to take a cent less than the previous price, and had the whole quantity burned on the spot. The weather was hot when they reached St. Peter's, and the sheep had 1500 miles to travel. Rae's ardor admitted of no delay. If a sheep showed signs of weakness, the order was, "Cut its throat, and drive on." As many as 45 were killed of a morning. When the party arrived at Red River, out of 1475 animals, only 251 survived; and of these many soon perished from the effects of the journey. So the sheep scheme failed.

It was followed by a new Company, the "Tallow Company." The Governor confessed that errors had been made; but about this there was no mistake. Were not the plains teeming with pasture? Where could limits be set to the production of hides and tallow? A herd of 473 cattle was purchased, and the stock-gambling was renewed with fervor. Each animal was tastefully branded on the haunch, "T. T."—meaning Tallow Trade, and the Red Riverians confessed they had never seen so beautiful a sight as the whole herd grazing peaceably together. Uncommon accident: early in May a severe frost occurred, and twenty-six of the foolish animals died. However, summer set all right, and the stock was at a premium. When winter came it was a different story. Thirty-two cattle died of the cold; on very severe nights, when the thermometer marked 40° and 45° below zero, the ears, horns, hoofs, and tails of the poor creatures fell off. Besides which, the wolves

helped themselves to fifty-three. This was discouraging. Still, with summer, the stockholders' courage revived, and there was more talk of fortunes in tallow. The second winter settled the business. With all their care, the managers could not keep out the wolves or protect the herd from the cold; and before spring, the assets of the concern were sold by auction. The tallow fortunes had melted away.

Of all these failures, John Company generally paid the damage, and the colony never ceased to prosper. It became an object for the Company to retain within their dominions those among their factors who had realized small fortunes; and as many of these had married native women, whom they could not introduce into European or civilized American society, and were, besides, attached to the wild life they had led, they were only too ready to accept Red River as a sort of refuge for their declining years. These constitute the aristocracy of the settlement. Next to them come the French Canadians (the Swiss and Germans have mostly disappeared), who are not to be distinguished from the men of the same race in Lower Canada; and again below them come the half-breeds. The Scotch and French Canadians are mostly farmers, and some of them uncommonly successful farmers. The half-breeds dislike a settled life. They prefer the excitement of the chase, or the idle life of the fisherman.

They are technically termed plain-hunters. Every spring they collect at the fort, to the number of a thousand or two—men, women, and children—buy, beg, or borrow carts, horses, guns, knives, powder, oxen, and other hunting materials; elect a chief captain and a dozen second captains; establish rules for the guidance of their hunt, and start forth into the plain. I had the good fortune to be allowed to join one of these expeditions. A priest accompanies the party to bless the undertaking. The rules established on these occasions are rigorous. No buffalo must be hunted on Sunday; disobedience of orders is punished with the destruction of the offender's saddle for the first offense, with a flogging for the second; theft even, where the object stolen is only a sinew, is avenged by the exposure of the thief in the middle of the camp, while the crier thrice shouts his name, coupling with it the word "thief."

Our march was long and often severe. With the plain-hunter there is no medium between a feast and a famine. Women and children often cry themselves to sleep every night for a week from sheer hunger; next week they are all ill of a surfeit. When the expedition reaches the hunting-ground, the camp is put in order. The carts are ranged in a circle, within which the women and children are placed. This done, the hunters mount their horses and survey the ground. With spy-glass in hand the captain reconnoitres the plain, and as soon as a herd of buffalo is discovered, assigns to each lieutenant his place in the hunt. When all is ready, and the men prepared—as

many as four hundred often start together—the commander gives the word "Start!" It is a cavalry charge. The whole body advances first at a slow trot, then at a gallop, then at full speed. As their speed increases, the earth trembles; but when the herd perceive their enemy, and begin to paw the ground and make off, the sound and shock are like an earthquake. A cloud of dust arises mingled with smoke. Right into the midst of the herd dash the hunters, firing as they go at the fattest cattle; ride on and on, through and through the close ranks of the buffalo, until there are but a few stragglers—the leanest brutes—alive. Each man has his mouth full of balls, and loads and fires at full gallop. As he seldom pulls a trigger until his gun is within a few feet of the mark, he hardly ever misses. Though the hunt seldom lasts over an hour or so, a good hunter will kill his ten or twelve buffaloes. It often happens that the party brings over twelve hundred tongues into the camp. The herd dispersed, the horses are relieved from duty, and the carts come into play. Their functions—or rather those of the hunters when their turn comes—appear the most embarrassing part of the business. Out of twelve hundred carcasses lying together, and shot by four hundred hunters, to find the beasts shot by each, appears a most knotty problem. It did not puzzle the plain-hunters. Every man knew his victims, and very few disputes arose. A hunter was once how he could possibly discover his eighth buffalo out of thirteen hundred, which lay jumbled together on the plain. The half-breed replied,

"Suppose four hundred learned men were all to write words on a piece of paper; would not each of them be able afterward to recognize his own handwriting?"

Just so, the plain-hunter recognized his shooting.

The task of skinning, drying, and manufacturing tallow and pemmican, mostly falls to the women; but as this business is often dangerous, the hunters superintend it. A hunter may escape the common accidents of the chase—broken bones, buffalo horns, and the like—and at the last moment fall a victim to the treacherous Sioux, who lurk about in the long grass on the wait for scalps. The fate of one poor fellow, named Louison Vallé, who perished in this way, is well remembered at Red River. He was skinning a buffalo after the chase, his little son keeping a look-out on his father's horse. The boy's attention flagged; Vallé's experienced eye detected a peculiar movement in the grass near him. He had only time to shout, "Make for the camp, my son! make for the camp!" when a shower of arrows overwhelmed him. The boy arrived safely in camp and gave the alarm. A party was instantly started in pursuit of the murderers, and before night eight of the twelve were hunted down and shot.

The settlement itself, in the short summer season, is like every other flourishing agricultural district. Vegetation is as luxuriant as in

the tropics; and cattle, apparently without number, pasture on wilds which have never been scarred with a fence. Among the Scotch settlers especially, comfortable houses, corn-yards, parks, and inclosures, betoken a very high degree of material prosperity. The French Canadians, in the invariable blue *capote*, with red belt, might be mistaken any day for the habitants one meets with traveling through Lower Canada; and the half-breeds—though a lower race, and essentially distinguished from the French Canadians by their habits of idleness and filth—dress, and, in many respects, live like them. Some few of the half-breeds, who are blessed with an unusually happy disposition, will work, and acquire, in course of time, a comfortable settlement; but by far the greater portion of the race preserve nomad habits throughout, and are contemptuously called squatters by the legitimate Red Riverians. They often have a passion for show; and will leave their children and wife in rags and ashes in order to appear on Sunday in a handsome turn-out. Others, again, and this is more characteristic of the women than the men, will sacrifice every thing, will even work, for tea. I was informed that the bashful maidens of Red River (the half-breeds, I mean), who will hardly ever dare to look a stranger in the face, or answer a civil question, who would deride an offer of dress or even money, can not resist the temptation of a couple of pounds of souchong.

The life of the thoroughly vagabond half-breed is well illustrated in Mr. Ross's sketch of Baptiste l'Esprit. He was, it may be observed, a well known character at Red River, and the type of a large class.

Baptiste had a wife and children; but they were all his property. When spring comes round Baptiste wants to join the hunt. He is in want of every thing. Wishes to make you believe he is the most honest fellow in the world. Wishes you to trust him, to try him once more. Promises every thing. Tries one; tries him this way, that way, the other way, every way, but is refused; yet the smile of confidence is never off his countenance while in his supplicating mood. Nor is it an easy task to resist importunities so urgent, and particularly when enforced by an object of charity; yet Baptiste is refused. But he is accustomed to refusals; such things never discourage him. Baptiste tries another and another, but with no better success. Unfortunately for Baptiste his character is known. Nevertheless, Baptiste, still confident in his own cause, tries another; accustomed to persevere, tries again and again; and at last, by dint of importunities and fair promises, gets a horse to hire from one, a cart from another; but as the risk is great, the price is in proportion. A man of means gets a horse and cart for \$10 a trip. Baptiste promises \$20. But he is in want of ammunition, of every thing else. Baptiste tries again; tries one, tries two, tries a dozen; at last succeeds. The rogue and the fool meet. Baptiste still wants clothing—

something from the merchant as well as the settler. Himself and family are naked. Baptiste sets out again; calls here, calls there, travels up, travels down, nothing discouraged; gets credit from some merchant at last. After a month's preparation, and before Baptiste is half ready, the time for starting arrives. The others are off; Baptiste must start too, ready or not ready. At this stage all Baptiste's hopes hang on a hair; he must go, or all is lost; but he can not go without something to eat. Charity steps forward, and a day after the rest, off goes Baptiste, helter skelter, with his horse and part of his family; but if no horse, as frequently happens, they tramp it on foot, neck or nothing. At the camp all is bustle; no one is idle but himself. The dogs eat, but Baptiste starves in the midst of plenty; asks, begs, lounges about, but shows no disposition to assist any one. He is above working; can not work. Sympathy steps forward. Baptiste must not starve. Gets a piece from one, some from another. Baptiste eats, but can not make provisions; has no servants; himself indolent, his family more so. They can do nothing but eat. However, they live well on the charity of others, and that is all they care about. Days pass, weeks pass, the summer passes; Baptiste eats, sleeps, smokes, and all is right; but no load; nothing to pay the hire of his horse and cart. The busy scenes of the camp pass unheeded by him. No effort made. Late and early every one is at work. Baptiste alone is idle, but consoles himself with saying, "There is time enough yet." Before he looks about him the hunters are loaded. A move is made for home. Baptiste is roused from his apathy. His cart is still empty. Begins to bestir himself. Goes round, asks one, asks two, asks this one, asks that one, asks every one for something to put in his cart; promises this, that, and the other thing. The people were shy, but Baptiste was not to be discouraged, did not slacken in his importunities; they upbraided him for his indolence, mistrusted his promises. Baptiste is no favorite, nevertheless he could sing a good song, tell a good story. Some pity his family; Charity stretches forth her hand, and now the cart is loaded in a trice—Baptiste the while as proud as if he had done all himself, quite satisfied, happy as happy could be. The last to start, the last to camp, Baptiste, fat as a seal, and sleek as an Esquimaux, arrives to resume again the delicious enjoyment of indolence.

As soon as he arrives, he sits down, smokes his pipe, then unloads his pony, and tells the story of his journey. Is highly pleased with the trip; praises his own industry and success. "Look," says he to his wife, "at this piece, look at that piece, and at that," turning them over and over. His wife is charmed; counts his profits. There is enough to pay all, so now they can enjoy themselves. A day, a week passes; but not a word about paying off debts till the load gets nearly expended; then they begin to reflect. They distribute the remains

of the profits a day after the fair. This piece is laid aside for a new gown for Madame, that piece for a shawl. So much for tea, so much for tobacco, the two great luxuries of Red River; a bit to this gossip, a bit to that. Madame has her cronies. Then there must be a merry let out. Friends are invited, a feast given, the last piece disappears. The load is gone. Then Baptiste for the first time begins to think of the borrowed horse, the borrowed cart, the generous friends who supplied him at starting. "We must," says he, "pay something; a little to one, a little to another." The happy couple reason the matter over and over. The piece set aside for the new gown is cut in two; half goes for the horse, half for present use. "We can do no more now," said the wife. To this Baptiste adds, "Amen. But we will pay all next trip." The new shawl, the tea, tobacco, etc., are attended to, and the cronies are not forgotten. After another consultation, Baptiste, with the half piece worth two dollars, the eighth of what he had promised, goes to settle with the owner of the horse, finds him, hangs down his head, is silent for some time, at last looks up with a sorrowful countenance, tells a pitiful story, very different from the one he told his wife. "I have been unfortunate," said he; "I had bad luck; my horse was sick, I broke my cart in the plains. Most of my provisions I lost in crossing a river. After a hard summer's labor, I had scarcely a mouthful left for my family. Brought nothing home; my cart was empty. Ask my comrades; they will confirm the truth of my statement. Here," says he, holding up the half piece, "is all I can give you now; but Baptiste never cheated any body; if you lend me the horse for next trip, I will pay you all honestly." Sympathy for poor Baptiste, and a desire to be paid, have their effect. The lender believes Baptiste, lends him the horse again, and the debt is doubled.

Of their domestic life, I obtained an occasional insight. On a journey through the settlement, some travelers visited one of their cabins, and found father, mother, and child, squatted, gipsy-like, within, there being no table, chair, or stool to render it comfortable. In one corner slept a young woman, having before her bed a couple of pieces of bark to serve as curtains, while on other parts of the floor slept four male travelers. A rain storm came on, and the rain beat through the log walls till we were all nearly ankle deep in water. Plash, plash through this went the child, about four years old, to light her mother's pipe at the chimney. Having returned with the pipe, she began quietly to nurse at her mother's breast; and after a short meal from this source, cried for the pipe, which was filled and lighted for her. After smoking heartily, the child passed the pipe to her father, by whom it was passed to the mother, and from the mother back to the little girl, who still filled up the intervals by nursing. Meanwhile the lady with the bark curtains was supplied with a pipe before she got up and dressed.